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S E C R E T AMMAN 001914

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/01/2008

TAGS: [EFIN](#)

SUBJECT: PROPOSED VISIT TO JORDAN BY TREASURY AUDITING TEAM

Classified By: Ambassador Edward W. Gnehm. Reasons 1.5 (b), (d).

1. (C) Post learned by email from NEA that Treasury Under Secretary Taylor contacted Jordanian Finance Minister Michel

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Marto and Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Umayya Toukan regarding Treasury's interest in sending a small auditing team to Amman to learn more about the activities and functioning of the Amman branch of Iraq's Rafidain Bank. We understand from a subsequent email that Treasury believed that U/S Taylor had secured Jordanian concurrence for such a visit.

2. (C) Regrettably, our interlocutors are unable to confirm an agreement to receive a Treasury team. Finance Minister Marto told the Ambassador March 27 that while he had no objection personally, he had referred U/S Taylor to Governor Toukan as the appropriate authority. Deputy Governor Muhammad Said Shahin told ECON/C March 31 that the Governor did not recall having approved a visit by such a team. After consulting again with the Governor, Shahin confirmed that Toukan believes he told U/S Taylor that such a request would have to be made through formal diplomatic channels so as to secure the agreement of the government as a whole. The Governor had, Shahin said, told U/S Taylor that he would be willing to review a Treasury questionnaire regarding Rafidain's local activities, which should also be submitted through diplomatic channels.

3. (S) Shahin noted that the Rafidain branch was subject to Jordanian laws and to the same CBJ supervision as any other bank in Jordan. He reiterated that the CBJ continues at his and the Governor's level to monitor individual transactions involving Iraqi accounts in Jordanian banks (including at Rafidain) and to block any transaction believed to involve the Iraqi government or its fronts. This is done in coordination with other GOJ agencies, including the intelligence services. Shahin added that he had been surprised at the relatively small number of requests for such transactions.

4. (C) Comment: Shahin made clear that the CBJ was ready to cooperate with Treasury provided it had political authorization. The Bank would also want to examine the domestic legal ramifications and to set parameters for a team's mission. Shahin said that PM Abul Ragheb was aware of Treasury's interest. Post would be happy to support a Treasury visit and to facilitate a formal request for Jordanian government approval if instructed to do by Washington and would be prepared to request M authorization for the visit under standing guidelines for authorized departure. Such an instruction from Washington should contain a specific description of a team's proposed mission and objectives. We also note that the security threat in Amman remains very high. In addition, the subject the team would be looking into is highly sensitive, as Shahin pointed out. For these reasons, and if accepted by the Jordanians, a team would need to keep an extremely low profile, working out of the Embassy building with the support and involvement of Economic Section staff.

GNEHM